

PURITANISM AND SOCIETY

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an England which is unmistakably modern emerges.
But, immense as were its accomplishments on the high stage of public affairs, its achievements in that inner world, of which politics are but the squalid scaffolding, were mightier still. Like an iceberg, which can awe the traveller by its towering majesty only because sustained by a vaster mass which escapes his eye, the revolution which Puritanism wrought in Church and State was less than that which it worked in men's souls, and the watchwords which it thundered, amid the hum of Parliaments and the roar of battles, had been learned in the lonely nights, when Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord to wring a blessing before he fled.

We do it wrong, being so majestic
To offer it the show of violence,

In the mysticism of Bunyan and Fox, in the brooding melancholy and glowing energy of Cromwell, in the victorious tranquillity of Milton, "unshaken, unseduced, unterrified," amid a world of self-seekers and apostates, there are depths of light and darkness which posterity can observe with reverence or with horror, but which its small fathom-line cannot plumb.

There are types of character which are like a prism, whose various and brilliant colours are but broken reflections of a single ray of concentrated light. If

the inward and spiritual grace of
Puritanism eludes the
historian, its outward and visible signs
meet him at
every turn, and not less in market-place
and counting-
house and camp, than in the student's
chamber and the
gathering of the elect for prayer. For to
the Puritan,
a contemner of the vain shows of
sacramentalism,
mundane toil becomes itself a kind of
sacrament. Like
a man who strives by unresting activity to
exorcise a
haunting demon, the Puritan, in the effort
to save his
own soul, sets in motion every force in
heaven above
or in the earth beneath. By the mere
energy of his
expanding spirit, he remakes, not only his
own character